

Freak Me Out

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Freak Me Out

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Summary

Three Times Tommy was there for Techno without being asked, and one time Techno was willing to ask.

This is part of the Nights Like These universe, and may not make sense without reading the main fic first.

Notes

I feel like there wasn't enough Techno and Tommy in NLT, so have this

One

Technoblade was not the eldest brother, but Tommy usually saw him as such. Technoblade was calm, collected, and very, very good at dealing with his own feelings. In Tommy's weeks of staying here, he had never seen Techno like this.

It was late, or possibly early, and Tommy had needed water. Logically, he could have gotten it from the sink in the bathroom upstairs, but that felt kind of gross, so he went to the kitchen. He'd expected to find it empty, or at the most to see Phil up drinking his coffee at some unholy hour because he needed to go to work early. He did not expect to see Techno fuming, picking at his sleeves, and stomping back and forth through the house.

"You... good?" Tommy asked, a little dumbfounded.

"I'm fine," Techno snapped back, not even looking up.

"You're wearing a hole in the floor."

"What do you want?" Techno hissed, turning his glare on Tommy. He looked... well, tired, mostly. The circles under his eyes weren't uncommon, he barely slept as it were, but now they looked like bruises in the low light of the room. His whole body was tense, like he was gearing for a fight, and Tommy's first instinct was to back down. He didn't know these people well enough to do this. He stepped forward anyway.

"You're having a panic attack. You need to sit down."

"I'm not- go back to sleep."

"You are, you're freaking out. You aren't going to feel better unless you *sit* and breathe."

“I’d feel better if I hit something.” Tommy snorted.

“Not volunteering for punching-bag duties, big man. Sit *down*. ” Techno yanked out a chair and sat. “Thank you. What has you so keyed up, anyway?”

“Nothing.”

“Technoblade.”

“Tommy.”

“For the love of *fuck* dude, you look like you’re about to explode. Just tell me what’s wrong so you can feel better and we can both go back to sleep like normal human beings.”

“You can go back to sleep. Nobody is stopping you.”

“Yeah, no. I’m actually not the kind of asshole who lets someone freak out alone, believe it or not. What’s going on?”

“I’m failing a class.”

“Are you actually failing, or do you have a C and are overreacting?”

“Shut up.”

“Dude. You don’t have to have perfect grades in every class.”

“That’s easy for *you* to say, your grades *are* perfect, and you don’t even have to work for them.”

“Okay, first off, I work very hard to get the grades I have. Second off, my classes are a lot easier than yours. Nobody is going to be disappointed in you for a C.”

“It’s a B-.” Techno grumbled.

“You’re *joking*. Tech, my man, a B- is a *good* grade. It’s literally above average.”

“No, it isn’t,” Techno grumbled. Tommy huffed out a laugh, pulling out his phone to look up Techo’s school’s grading scale. He held the phone out, showing him the B+, B, and B- letters, with the explanation for the letter. ‘Indicative of above-average performance in class’. “Look, it literally says it on your grading scale. You don’t need to freak out. You’re doing fine.” Techno looked at the words for a moment before breathing out a sigh.

“Okay. You’re right. I’m being stupid.”

“I didn’t say you were being stupid, man. It’s alright to get frustrated, but you’re obviously doing your best. There’s no need to panic. You need to get some sleep.”

“Thank you,” Technoblade mumbled.

“Any time, man. As long as I’m here, feel free to knock on the door and get me.”

Two

The car pulled over so quickly Tommy was half sure he’d have whiplash. Techno was clutching the steering wheel so tightly it creaked. The car that had nearly hit them drove away like nothing happened.

“Techno? You alright?”

“They almost hit us. We could have died.”

“They didn’t hit us, though. We’re both fine, yeah? Not even a scratch on the car.” They were coming home from Tommy’s doctor’s appointment, checking up on a minor infection that they’d been keeping a very close eye on. “Tech, put the car in park.”

“We almost died,” Techno repeated flatly.

“Put the car in park,” Tommy repeated. He winced as he shifted in his seat, the bandages pulling at raw skin. Techno obliged, slamming the gearshift forward with maybe a bit too much aggression. “You’re angry, you’re scared. But you’re safe. We both are.”

“We almost weren’t.”

“But we are. The almost-maybes don’t matter, because we *are* safe. We’re both fine.” Techno was now tapping his hands on the steering wheel.

“You- we-”

“Are fine. We’re both fine, Techno. Look around. There’s no wreck, no blood, no ambulances. We didn’t get hit, we’re both completely fine.”

“But-”

“Listen to me. Listen to what I’m saying. We’re *fine*. ”

“We’re fine.”

“Yes.”

“We didn’t get hit?”

“No, we didn’t get hit. Are you okay?”

“I’m fine. We’re alive.” Tommy laughed.

“Yeah, big man. We’re alive.”

Three

The mall was busy. It was almost Christmas, after all, and everyone and their mother was trying to get last-minute gifts. Techno was scowling.

“You good?” Tommy asked quietly from his side.

“It’s- loud.” Techno grit out.

“Okay, let’s go back to the car.”

“No, we need-”

“Technoblade. The car.”

“Okay.” They made it out the doors and to the vehicle with little more than a hiss at the light of the afternoon sun from Techno. Once they made it to the car, Tommy got out the sunglasses he kept stashed in the glove compartment, as well as his headphones.

“Here.”

“I don’t want to listen to music,” Techno grumbled, still tense, still panicked.

“You’re not going to. You’re going to use them to block out sounds. Put them on.” Techno looked at him warily but listened, pulling them over his ears with a grimace and shoved the sunglasses over his eyes. No sooner than they were on, he relaxed minutely.

They sat in silence for another fifteen minutes, as the tension slowly released from his shoulders. Slowly, Techno removed the headphones.

“I’m okay now,” He muttered.

“What caused that?”

“I- just, just a lot of things happening at once. The lights were loud, the people were loud, they kept running into me, it was just... a lot, I guess.” Tommy nodded.

“Okay. Do you want to try the music store outside of town instead? It’s small, shouldn’t be crowded, and it’s a lot dimmer in there.”

“I thought you wanted the yellow Uke for Tubbo? The one in the mall shop.”

“I can find something else if they don’t have one. It’s fine. You’re more important than a specific colored ukulele, dumbass.”

+One

Technoblade was not weak. That being said, he'd never felt quite so fragile. It was something stupid, a plate shattering against the floor, that sent him into the panic, but the glass had been swept away *hours* ago, and he should be fine.

He wasn't fine. He was replaying the sound of shattered ceramic on hardwood over and over and over in his mind. It usually wasn't like this. He and Wilbur had both broken plenty of flatware since moving in with Phil. But it had been a long day, and a longer week, and he was already hanging on by the thinnest of threads.

When he felt like this as a kid, he'd go to Wilbur. His brother, his best friend, his second half, was always there to untangle whatever knots formed in his chest. When they got older, he went to Phil, too, and eventually Dream, but still, Wil was always the one he could call on to make it better. He didn't *like* reaching out for help, but years and years of therapy had made him better about doing it anyway. But Wil was busy. He'd left the house with a laugh and a halfhearted threat that his phone would be off, but Techno knew that wasn't true. His phone would be on 'do not disturb', but there were three exceptions to the setting, three people whose number would reach him anyway. Techno *knew*, if he called, Wilbur would come home. He would not be angry, or frustrated, or put off in any way, he would be sympathetic and kind and as gentle as he always was.

But. Wilbur had been looking forward to seeing this play for months, was thrilled at being able to spend time with his friends and enjoy a day away from the chaos of home. Techno didn't want to rob him of his chance at relaxation, so he didn't call. He'd been staring at his phone for hours, home alone with Tommy being gone for the weekend and Phil out of town until Monday. The house was empty, nothing but Techno, shattered glass in the kitchen bin, and deafening, oppressive silence.

He was a grown man. He should be fine. This should not have him so upset.

He dialed a number with trembling hands. He should not be upset. He should be okay alone.

The phone rang. Once, twice, and Techno almost hung up, but as he went to hit the red button, the call began.

“Techno? What’s up, big man?”

“T-Tommy?” Had he called Tommy?

“Yeah, it’s me. What’s going on?”

“How far from home are you?” Tommy didn’t respond for a beat, then two, then-

“I’ll be there in twenty minutes. I’m getting on the highway now, if traffic isn’t too bad, I can be there in ten. What’s wrong?” Techno felt stupid. He was bothering his little brother over nothing.

“I- I broke a plate.” Tommy hummed, barely audible over the sound of the van. He was annoyed- he was having a good time and Techno had ruined it-

“Are you hurt?”

“No, no I’m okay. I just-“ Overwhelmed. Lonely. Freaking out over nothing. He didn’t say anything.

“I get it. I’m coming. Where are you now?” He didn’t have to say anything. Tommy knew him as well as he knew himself.

“I’m in my room.”

“Okay, tell me about your room. How many books are on the second-highest shelf?” Techno wrinkled his eyebrows, but started counting them.

“Uh, twelve. Why are you-?”

“What’s the plant in your windowsill? They’re... helicopter plants, right?”

“Propeller plants.”

“Right, that’s the one. Why do you have so many of those, again?”

“They’re easy to propagate, easier to take care of. They only need water once every few weeks, and they grow year-round without kicking up a fuss.”

“What do they look like?” Tommy *knew* what they looked like. He had a batch of them in his room. Techno answered anyway.

“They look like propellers. They grow in a spiral and have kind of triangle-shaped leaves, they’re sort of greenish? They look like plants.”

“Bet I could kill them in two weeks.” Tommy was good with plants. He had yet to kill a single thing Techno had given him.

“Please don’t,” Techo laughed, and the tension in his shoulders relaxed. He unclenched his fists.

“Oh! On your desk, how many rings are on the rack? It’s like, seventeen, right?”

“There’s nineteen.” Tommy knew that, didn’t he? He’s said something about it the other day, about needing to find one more so he’d have an even twenty. Why was he-?

“Nineteen! I knew that. You just got some new ones, right? Tell me about ‘em.”

“I- one has a boar skull that was 3D printed and cast in iron, it has gold accents and rubies in the eyes. The other is- uh, it’s white gold? It has feathers engraved on it.”

“Crow feathers?”

“No, uh- they’re owl feathers, I think.”

“Why owl feathers?”

“It’s a joke, Owls don’t like crows, I bought it to annoy Dad.”

“Was he annoyed?” Techno couldn’t hear the van anymore.

“No, he thought it was funny.”

“That sounds like him,” Tommy teased from the doorway. Techno had not heard him pull in. He ended the call. “What’s going on, Tech?” And it was *soft* . It was gentle but it demanded an answer anyway, like Tommy always did. Tommy, who was still so *young* , even though he was 18 now, Tommy, who never let things stew after the fight that left him scarred, Tommy, who always forced Technoblade to take care of himself. His brother, whose eyes shined with mischief and worry and fondness when he moved to sit in front of Techno.

“I just- I needed someone here. The quiet was suffocating me.” Tommy gave him a sad smile.

“You should have called sooner. I’ve never been quiet a day in my life.” The sympathy gave way to amusement, and Tommy began the process of comforting in the way he knew best.

Techblade had never been so grateful to have someone to fill the silence so well. It was not Wilbur’s gentle assurance. It wasn’t Dream’s mild and playful taunting. It wasn’t Phil’s patient, firm words. It was Tommy, loud and harsh and so very good at distracting Techno from whatever had him stuck. Tommy dragged to his feet, already talking a mile a minute about fireflies and how they looked like stars in the woods he’d been camping in, and Techno followed, feeling himself untangle just as gracefully as ever, while Tommy made tea and complained and teased.

Technoblade was not weak, but on the rare times he fell, he knew his brother would be there to help him back to his feet anyway.

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